Shards of Beyond - Lore

Eons ago, there was nothing but a singularity which can be thought of as a dense energy crystal. For whatever reason, that crystal shattered and created the universe as we know it. Today, the most important place is a large capital city that is based on ancient Rome, strategically located between hills and forest on a river, close to the sea. This city is the capital of a human empire (in game that is the Mortal Realm). This city is a cultural melting pot, and there are people from all over the empire, mixing all sorts of influences, cultures and architectural styles. The city is governed by a Senate, but there are myriad factions vying for power, like clans, guilds, army factions, secret cults and cabals, the temples and rebel groups. Most recently, this conflict has been amplified by the fact that shards of the singularity have been discovered. These are powerful crystals that allow people to use all kinds of magic, like controlling minds, summoning storms and powerful beasts or opening portals to other dimensions.

The 4 other Realms are:

Divine: Is heavily inspired by Ancient Egypt and Middle Eastern mythology. There are still tombs and ruins of a once powerful empire in the desert that were devoted to serving their gods, and they have left behind powerful technology, like crystal powered automatons. The majority of the Divine Realm is comprised of angels, the enforcers of the dogmatic teachings of the faith. They represent totalitarian order, and they are very concerned about the possible consequences of anyone but them controlling the crystals.

Void: Void is Chaos, corruption, the antithesis to being. Void mainly represents demons and manifestations of human desires and emotions, as well as undeads like skeletons and vampires. Many of them are hiding and have their own agendas.

Nature: is untamed life and growth, represented by large animals, dinosaurs and plants. They live in the vast jungles. Some humans live among them. These beings are naturally drawn to the crystals for their healing powers and have become more aggressive as of late.

Elemental: the raw violence of the Elements, represented by Vulcanic eruptions, Earthquakes, floods, tropical storms and lightning. There are some beings that can control them like Spirits and Kami, but also Dragons and some human wizards that have learned to control the elements.

The Realms are not „Kingdoms“ in the sense that they are perfectly geographically separated, but rather different in philosophy and values, so more closely related to the color pie in magic the gathering, although somewhat different.

For the Lore, the capital city is a melting pot of cultures, the capital of a large empire reminiscent of Ancient Rome. This is where most of the action occurs, as many factions are vying for power and influence.

We will go over some of these factions in more detail later.

The divine realm is comprised of the remnants of a large civilization that is now lost and buried under the sand. Nobody knows whether there was always a desert there, but some speculate that it used to be a green and lush place. Their temples and cities are buried in the sand, with some damaged relics and automatons, powered by unknown sources, wander about the ruins. There are rumors about the devastation that was brought to this empire by a mad god-king, only known as the Pharaoh. The rest of the divine realm is comprised of Angels. These angels were disconnected from the real world and trapped in what is considered to be heaven, a different dimension from normal reality. Not a lot is known about them and their agenda, whether they serve an almighty god, several gods, or a demon that has infiltrated their place. They are strict and cruel, and place their laws above everything else, similar to the lost desert civilization. There are many prophecies and events happening that break the regular understanding of our concepts of reality, space and time.

In the west of the Rome like empire lies a sprawling jungle. The jungle is inhabited by a number of tribes and all kinds of plants and animals, among them dinosaurs. Recently, the animals behavior shifted dramatically, and they have started attacking human settlements.

Elemental mainly comprises the elements and weather as well as corresponding phenomena. There are a number of wizards and monastic orders that try to understand and control the elements. Some of them have learned to fly or summon storms. The dragons have lived in the mountains at the edge of the world, but something has caused them to leave their homes. Dragons are sentient beings, but their motivations are difficult to comprehend for a human being. They also don’t have a society comparable to the human empire. They are generally power hungry and dominant, though some have entered alliances with humans. There are rumors that some have even managed to control the dragons. The number of natural disasters of all kinds has dramatically increased recently.

The Void comprises everything that is the opposite of normal, they inhabit the infinite emptiness and different dimensions where rules and physics don’t apply. It is constantly turning and shifting, but recently, cracks have shown up between reality and these parallel dimensions, and some of the beings that inhabit the void have begun to manifest themselves in the real world. The energies of the Void are made responsible for all sorts of unnatural things that corrupt and change reality.

We have decided to go with the following concept for each Booster Set and the corresponding Lore: Each Set and the cards are a "snapshot" of the world at a given time. We are not directly telling a continuous story akin to MTG lore (which is honestly very cringe) but we will hint at certain developments in the world via the flavor text of the cards. The setting remains the same for now.

Especially for the Core Set, which introduces the world, there should be an aura of mystery, and subtle hints at major developments. The crystals have just very recently been discovered at this point and it is what sets the entire history of the world in motion.

## Factions

Next we will go over some the factions that exist in the world that are at the intersection between Realms:

1. Thunderswarm (Divine & Elemental). The Thunderswarm are zealous warrior angels, inspired by valkyries and nordic themes. Their appearance is often accompanied by lightning and thunderstorms, but they rarely appear in the world. Their rune symbols can be found scattered across the empire in ancient and lost places, which most scholars assume to be from an ancient lost civilization.

2. Moonspear (Divine & Mortal). The Moonspear is an order of crusaders. They wear very rare blue steel armor and their members were often former high ranking members of the imperial army. There are rumours that some of them are just the spirits of fanatic crusaders trapped in their armor. They hunt heretics.

3. Tranquil Herd (Divine & Nature). The Tranquil Herd is an amalgamation of various beasts that live in the jungle. Many of them have been exposed to the powerful magic of the crystals, which has turned them into part crystal part animal hybrids, making them virtually invincible. They act on instinct, and they are drawn to the magic of the crystals.

4. Ivoryscar (Divine & Void). The Ivoryscar is a loose collection of mostly angels and fallen angels, that walk the fine line between opposites, the balance between light and dark. They are very powerful, but they can never be found, and nobody knows their agenda.

5. Cinderguard (Elemental & Mortal). The Cinderguard Rebellion is an alliance of rebels of all walks of life in the empire. They strive for freedom and want to abolish the empire's strict laws and institutions for greater freedoms. Some call them anarchists. They are known for wearing Red Hoods and cloaks, and they have some very talented people and specialists among their ranks. They wait in the shadows for the right moment to strike. Some of them are known to carry blades covered in fire.

6. Shardhorde (Elemental & Nature). The Shardhorde is the representation of the true power of nature & the elements. They are not a real faction in the truest sense of the word, they are untamed power.

7. Skulloath (Elemental & Void). Inspired by the Mongolian Hordes. They are out for conquest and pose a real threat to the empire. There are rumors that evil corrupted half beast half man creatures are among their ranks. They induce fear in their enemies, and many of them wear armor made of the bones of their slain enemies.

8. Gladehost (Mortal & Nature). Inspired by Japanese Samurai. These people strive for harmony with nature and the wild, peaceful co-existence. They are excellent warriors though when provoked, and often lead domesticated animals into battle. They are also very stealthy and can become virtually invisible in their natural environments, like forests and mountains.

9. Forsaken (Mortal & Void). The Forsaken is the collective term for the most powerful underground societies in the empire. They control the Thieves Guild, employ assassins and spies, and control many of the dealings and political life of the empire from the shadows. There are rumors that some of them have become immortal vampires, and that some plan to build an army of undead soldiers to overthrow the empire.

10. Tainted Jade (Nature & Void). The Tainted Jade is an Inka-inspired death cult. They cultivate herbs and mushrooms with hallucinogenic effects, which they obsessively consume to gain greater insights and connect with Nature and their gods. They live in remote parts of the Jungle, and study insects and plants. There are rumors that some of their highpriests have managed to conquer death, and that they can resurrect dead animals.